UNITED
NATIONS

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Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

S/1996/33
16 January 1996
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: ARABIC

LETTER DATED 15 JANUARY 1996 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF IRAQ TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit to you herewith a letter dated 11 January 1996 addressed to you by Mr. Mohammed Said Al-Sahaf, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Iraq, concerning the practices engaged in by United States naval forces stationed in the Arabian Gulf.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Nizar HAMDOON
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex

Letter dated 11 January 1996 from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iraq addressed to the President of the Security Council

I should like to inform you of the practices engaged in by forces of the United States Navy stationed in the Arabian Gulf. On 23 December 1995 such forces intercepted the Panamanian-registered ship Michael-R and forced it to proceed to Bahrain in order to submit to another full inspection after it had already been inspected once while at sea. This was despite the fact that the documents on board, issued by the United Nations, were clear and in good order. The vessel in question had been leased by the World Food Programme (WFP), which is, as you know, an agency of the United Nations, and was carrying a cargo of flour and lentils that had been shipped by WFP in the framework of its humanitarian programmes in Iraq.

Such conduct represents the epitome of contempt for the Charter of the United Nations and for the Organization's agencies and their humanitarian activities. The vessel in question had obtained the proper clearances from the Sanctions Committee and had followed the procedures required in situations of this kind. The failure of these forces to honour documents issued by the United Nations is to be regarded as an insult to the Organization, and it has become a typical practice of the United States and its naval forces in the Arabian Gulf that has the objective of aggravating the impact of the total embargo imposed on the Iraqi people in a desire to exacerbate the suffering of that people as part of the war of extermination being waged against it with a view to achieving predetermined and malicious political objectives that bear no relation to the resolutions of the United Nations and are in flagrant violation of the Charter.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Mohammed Said AL-SAHAF
Minister for Foreign Affairs
of the Republic of Iraq